



9000 Overland Ave.  
Culver City, CA 90230  
www.wlac.edu

# 2008

# Rosa Parks Essay Contest

**“And Justice for All”  
THE UNFINISHED BUSINESS  
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All West Los Angeles College students in good academic standing\* are eligible to enter.



**R**osa Louise McCauley was born in Tuskegee, Alabama, on February 4, 1913. She attended Alabama State Teachers College (now Alabama State University) and made her living as a seamstress. In 1943 she became a member of the Montgomery (Alabama) chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and served as its secretary until 1956. On December 1, 1955, she was arrested for refusing to relinquish her seat on a public bus to a white man, a violation of the city's racial segregation ordinances. Under the aegis of the Montgomery Improvement Association and the leadership of the young pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Martin Luther King, Jr., a boycott of the municipal bus company was begun on December 5. It lasted until December 20, 1956, when the U.S. Supreme

Court upheld a lower court's decision declaring Montgomery's segregated seating unconstitutional. For her role in sparking the successful campaign, which brought King to national prominence, Parks became known as the "mother of the Civil Rights Movement."

In 1957 Parks and her family moved to Detroit, where she was employed on the staff of U.S. Representative John Conyers from 1965 until her retirement in 1988. She remained active in the NAACP, and the Southern Christian Leadership Council established the annual Rosa Parks Freedom Award in her honor. In 1987 she established the Parks Institute for Self-Development in Detroit to provide career training for young people. Her autobiography, *Rosa Parks: My Story*, written with Jim Haskins, was published in 1992.

**Essay Contest sponsored by the Good and Welfare Committee of the West LA College Chapter of AFT 1521 College Guild.**

For more information please contact **Bonnie Blustein** at [blusteb@wlac.edu](mailto:blusteb@wlac.edu) or (310) 287-4217.

\*Requirement: Students must have a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 in all units attempted at West Los Angeles College.



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## CONTEST GUIDELINES

The essay must be the original work of the contestant. A brief letter of introduction, a statement concerning your background and contact information (name, address, phone, email) must appear on a separate 1-page cover sheet and *not* on the essay material.

**Length:** essays must be a minimum of 3 pages, maximum of 5 pages, typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins (750 to 1,500 words, total).

Essays must be *received* by **April 25, 2008**.  
Winners will receive awards at the Scholarship Awards Assembly at West Los Angeles College in May 2008.

### Mail Entries to:

Rosa Parks Memorial Essay Contest  
c/o West Los Angeles College  
9000 Overland Avenue  
Culver City, CA 90230  
Attn: Professor Bruce Anders (English)

For additional information, contact **Bonnie Blustein** at [blusteb@wlaac.edu](mailto:blusteb@wlaac.edu) or (310) 287-4217.

### Suggestions for Writing Your Essay

Rosa Parks wrote in her book Quiet Strength:



*"I am always troubled whenever I see injustice against any race of people. Growing up in the South, I saw so much of this that I feel deeply that no human being should ever be treated unjustly. I am concerned about any discrimination, of any people, regardless of race or other physical difference."*

What in your own background has led you to be concerned about injustice? Give one or more examples of how you have responded to injustice or discrimination against people seen as different from yourself. What has the example of Rosa Parks meant to you?

## AWARDS

- \$ 250 First Prize
- \$ 175 Second Prize
- \$ 75 Third Prize
- Honorable Mentions